



## Catawba County Public Health

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### 37 SCHOOLS EARN HONORS THROUGH HEALTHY SCHOOLS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

HICKORY, NC – A total of 37 elementary, middle and high schools from Catawba County are being recognized for creating healthy environments through Catawba County Public Health's Healthy Schools Recognition Program.

Although the Healthy Schools Recognition Program has been in place for six years, this is the first time schools had the opportunity to reach more strenuous achievement goals through the program. This year, there were three recognition tiers – 18 schools met first-tier requirements, five reached the second tier, and 14 took home top health honors. All total, there were five more schools that met goals this year over last.

"Schools were striving to continue the healthy climate and were encouraged to do extra things to go above and beyond," said Jennifer Lindsay, School Health Supervisor for Catawba County Public Health. "Many schools rose to the challenge and worked toward adding more active time and offering more healthy food and drink options inside the school and at school events."

The Healthy Schools Recognition Program has helped support healthier school environments for students in public and private schools across the county. Coordinated by Catawba County Public Health's School Health nurses, the program encourages healthy nutrition and physical activity policies that help create healthier environments in schools. Public and private schools serving students in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to participate on a voluntary basis. Participating schools receive technical assistance throughout the year and are evaluated annually.

To earn the Healthy Schools designation, schools were required to have a School Wellness Council and serve fresh fruits and vegetables at least three times per week at lunch, as well as offer water in the cafeteria for students to drink. All K-8<sup>th</sup>-grade schools provided opportunities for 30 minutes of physical activity each day, and fundraisers tried to avoid non-healthy foods. Vending, store and concession areas provided healthy options lower in fat, salt and sugar at these schools.

Eighteen schools were able to complete these tasks to earn the Healthy Schools designation: Newton-Conover High, Discovery High, North Newton Elementary, South Newton Elementary/ACT, Oakwood Elementary, Longview Elementary, Hickory Career and Arts Magnet, Blackburn Elementary, Bunker Hill High, Challenger High, Fred T. Foard High, Maiden Middle, Maiden High, Webb A. Murray Elementary, Snow Creek Elementary, St. Stephens High, Startown Elementary and Montessori at Sandy Ford.

Five schools, Oxford Elementary, Mountain View Elementary, Catawba Elementary, Northview Middle and Viewmont Elementary, all met second-tier requirements. These schools offered additional physical activity opportunities and avoided unhealthy foods in fundraisers. The schools' vending, store and concession areas provided healthy options lower in fat, salt and sugar.

Fourteen schools, Shuford Elementary, Jenkins Elementary, Southwest Elementary, Grandview Middle, Hickory High School, Balls Creek Elementary, Banoak Elementary, Claremont Elementary, Clyde Campbell Elementary, Lyle Creek Elementary, Maiden Elementary, Sherrills Ford Elementary, St. Stephens Elementary and Tuttle Elementary, all earned the highest level of Healthy Schools designation. On top of meeting goals for the other designation levels, these schools encouraged physical activity outside of the normal school day, and met stricter recommendations for avoiding unhealthy foods in fundraisers, and vending, store and concession areas and provided additional healthy options lower in fat, salt and sugar.

Catawba County Public Health promotes and protects the health of all Catawba County residents through preventive services, innovative partnerships, and community health improvement initiatives. For more information, please call (828) 695-5800 or visit [www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth](http://www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth).

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*"Leading the Way to a Healthier Community"*

